

# REWRITE



## The Magazine of Effective Writing

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### HOW DO YOU ATTACK YOUR PROBLEMS?

Here is a stickful of paragraphs from one of the recent advertising "columns" prepared by Doubleday & Company's publicity dept. It may set you thinking. It first was printed in the *NEW YORKER*:

It is interesting how, in the arts, the word "experimental" tends to take on an unfavorable meaning for the average person. Too often the true experimenter is confused with the mere eccentric or the exhibitionist.

Yet without experiment, obviously, there can be no growth in any art form. And at present the

fields of art and music are being widened by sculptors in welding masks, by painters who drip colors on the canvas, by composers working with electronic devices.

Meanwhile in literature there has been, since the deaths of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, little significant effort to broaden the scope of the novel.

The point is well taken, even though both of the authors mentioned are extremely literary and not read widely by the great mass of average readers or those attuned to very popular forms of the book length. Form is a phase of longer writing that is often taken too much for granted. The soft cover, paper back publishers have been doing some experimenting both in form and taste. The older method of dividing a novel into chapters giving way to various systems of "books" and a long sequence of scenes or what-not, broken at intervals by dots and their equivalents, still lays a conventional and often deadening hand on many novels today.

Two thoughts come to me regarding this idea of what constitutes "experimentation". I think the author lurking behind the pseudonym of "L. L. Day" has first in mind that a good experiment is not merely using form to achieve a bizarre effect. It should develop naturally out of his material and what he desires to say about it. And possibly also out of a good, practical editorial sense for an innovation in presentation that gives additional vigor and freshness to his ideas.

Secondly, and this is especially true, it seems to me, the higher you rise in the intellectual scale, the relation of experimentation to the art of telling a good story is increasingly important. The greatest storytellers have always overflowed with an exuberance and vitality that could be measured in the form and presentation of their myths as well as the basic contents. They never have hesitated to invent new forms, new and exciting ways to kindle the reader's imagination.

It is undoubtedly true that experimenting is healthy and enables any art to grow. The failure of American writers, magazines, and books to develop new forms, new ideas, novel presentation, is just one more price that we pay for worshipping at the altar of that great god, standardization. We sacrifice again and again individuality, that products can be produced and merchandised in tremendous quantities. That makes it cheap, but a peculiar usefulness for the individual, and an adaptability to unforeseen circumstances is thereby lost. And that is what true "experimentation" is designed to overcome.

Like the manufacturer of a cheap dress, a magazine editor tends to reach for forms or fads, and to run them into the ground, then create a new "model". But unlike the garment and automobile industries, which operate on seasonal schedules, magazines and, to a lesser extent, book publishers accept a conventionalized form and maintain it as long as a multi-million circulation and the resulting advertising holds up. As soon as either begins to drop, the "book" is torn apart, and new convention is established. The difficulty is that the world does move. A long publicized "dress" is hard to scrap overnight. It is extremely difficult to overlap generations. The new generations want their own, personalized literature, designed especially for them.

That is why so many magazines that seemed to be national institutions have suddenly & surprisingly floundered and disappeared. And why those that have appeared equally stable and have retained popularity, did so simply because while remaining "conventional," they had, in reality, been constantly experimenting, chipping away bit by bit the old forms and changing their formats so imperceptibly that when the dangerous days came, they were already adjusted in great part to the new & changed conditions.

And that in a word is what writers need to learn to do. If you want to get paid & money is a necessary, essential end-product for you, you cannot afford to be unconventional in your approach. You should study markets, pick the brains of editors and supply to the best of your ability the exact type of mass they desire. And do it better and in a more helpful manner than your competitors. In a word, you try to eliminate every possible & probable rejection factor you can foresee. You try to be fresh and unconventional, but always within the limitations set by an editor. Even then, you don't stray very far away from the straight and narrow path. You try only to avoid the trite. Or if you have your eye on a big circulation magazine, you try to express the trite in a novel way. It is cleverness rather than uniqueness you seek.

But when you are no longer an unknown writer and the pressure of making money is less heavy on you, you can afford to take larger chances. You can experiment a little with a new method or seemingly new idea. Perhaps you can suggest to your editor friends some new way of dressing up a familiar format or the treatment. You have authority now & readers will go along with you where they would not when you were an unknown. But even now do not try to "tear the book apart", do not reconstruct the world all in a single day. Remember that business of imperceptible change. Haste makes waste, and it is human nature to resist change.

Finally, there is the third stage. You are a big name; you are good for circulation. It is possible for you now to really experiment. But you still have to think of readers, get

Please turn to P. 12

## REWRITE

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<u>BE A</u>	<u>William E. Harris,</u>	<u>KEEP</u>
<u>GOOD</u>	<u>Eiva Ray Harris,</u>	<u>AMERICA</u>
<u>NEIGHBOR</u>	<u>Editors.</u>	<u>FREE</u>

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### AN END TO APPEASEMENT!

This is probably the most important editorial we have ever written in REWRITE. Only one issue ago we labelled our agreement "to meet with the representatives of Red China, in Geneva, an 'act of treason' to all whose temporary security and hope for a decent world lie largely in our hands." Already that declaration has become obsolete, an obvious understatement.

There can be no compromise with the present Communist regime. Sen. Margaret Chase Smith is completely right that the existing struggle is a moral one. Either we must defend our principles, and the right of all peoples everywhere to liberty and freedom of the human soul, or submit piece-meal to chaos & spiritual degradation of the worst kind. No other alternative remains. The Kremlin represents an autocracy dedicated to super and complete slavery of the human race. To writers, of all persons, this is intolerable.

The free world must seize the initiative, and hold it irrevocably. The Communists are afraid of only one thing, a united world opinion, that openly despises their methods, and refuses to let them spout their evasive, dilatory and unmitigatedly dishonest propaganda. This is designed only to create anarchy misunderstanding and weariness, and to drive wedges of indecision and false hope between the free peoples of the world.

Taking the initiative does not mean merely a policy of containment of Communism inside its own borders. It means not permitting a single further free nation to wither, and be plucked from the vine, as we allowed Czechoslovakia, and are now letting Guatemala

to be gobbled up and used as springboard, for further beguiling infiltration.

There is, incidentally, a means for doing this that the free world has not yet tried. Let the United Nations appoint a non-political trusteeship commission to work with the people of nations in difficulty and not yet sufficiently educated to democracy. Had this been done in Indo-China, the French Government need not have lost face. A satisfactory compromise between the French and the native Viet-Namense could have been worked out. If force became necessary, action could in all probability have been limited to police action rather than war. As we go to press, the same is even more true of Guatemala, where a consulting group can probably be drawn from the free nations of the Pan-American Union, without interference by Russia.

We have failed to put the Soviets on the defensive because we have depended too much on the outworn diplomatic check-mate of saber-rattling. Today's world is far more complex. The political, economic, social and cultural well-being of many nations must be taken into account. Blustering and threatening an enemy with atomic weapons is merely to create fears among our allies, and reduce ourselves to the feudalistic level of immoral, robber-baron gangsterism of our opponents. It is essential that we do not lose faith in our principles of liberty and freedom under God for all men. We must never forget that without any exception no free and prosperous nation has ever surrendered its government to communist control willingly. Only in times of despair and economic dislocation have nations listened to the siren song, and then, even then, submitted unwillingly to capture by force and deceit, international rape.

There are ways to stop the Communists cold. We have never actually, at the top level of diplomacy, charged them to be moral outlaws and acted accordingly. We have always tried too hard to get along with them, and reach a settlement on their terms. The only tactics they recognize and respect are those of brute force and isolation. Whenever we have ignored them they have sought quickly to re-open negotiations. We must make the terms.

We have never succeeded in putting our best foot forward in dealing with free nations & our allies. We have made them feel financially dependent on us; we have not emphasized our unflinching belief in high moral principles and true democracy for all peoples. Too often we have sided with the reactionary forces in their countries; have favored the rights of property holders as against rights of the people. Thus we have been likened to the colonial empire builders rather than defenders of the liberty and freedom we mouth so much. We want nothing, but a free world.

Most of all, we must learn to live & trade with all free people. Exchange goods and culture. No high tariffs and hoarded surpluses. We must compete with & beat the Soviets.

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### RECENT PRIZE CONTESTS

The Harper Prize Novel Contest, Harper & Brothers, 49 E. 33rd St., NYC 16. The 1954 Contest closed on June 1st. Now is the time to start preparing for the next award. This prize, totalling \$10,000, is offered biennially.

The Charles W. Follett Award, 1255 So. Wabash Ave., Chicago 5, Ill. This \$3,000 prize offered for "worthy contributions (non-fiction or fiction) to children's literature," closes July 1st, not Aug. 1st, as the first printed announcements stated.

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, 570 Lexington Ave., NYC 22. The 10th Short Story Contest, in co-operation with Little, Brown and Co. Prizes: \$1,500, nine second prizes, \$500 each, Special Award of Merit, \$1,000, and a \$500 prize for the best "first" story. The length limit is 10,000 words. No limit on a writer's number of submissions. Additional small sums may be paid for book-anthology & pro rata share of the royalties, if the anthology should be chosen by a book club.... Contest closes: Oct. 20, 1954.

Omaha Junior Theater, Mrs. Emmy Gifford, 3635 Burt St., Omaha, Neb., offers a prize, of \$25, for the best exhibit presented by a theater organization at the Children's Theater Conference Annual Meeting. (Page 10.)

Benjamin Franklin Magazine Awards, University of Illinois. Late in May, these new prizes to be awarded annually, for the next 5 years through an anonymous gift, were announced. Eight in all (\$500 each), four are for various types of articles, one for fiction (short story), one for humor, and one, for "outstanding meritorious" work in an unspecified category. Distinguished and meritorious editing in the public interest will also rate one. A dinner meeting is held.

The American Committee for Cultural Freedom & Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., will award \$1,000 and publication for a book-length ms. about civil liberties and intellectual freedom in the U. S. Closes: May 31, 1955.

### A WORD ABOUT WRITERS' COUNSEL SERVICE

We practically never mention our WRITERS' COUNSEL SERVICE (a non-advertised service), in REWRITE. Many writers have read it for a decade or more without even knowing that we help writers professionally. Elva and I prefer it that way. This puts the emphasis for REWRITE on its being an independent writers' magazine. It enables us to give more practical help to writers at a distance without a string attached. And it lets writers come in their own free way to us when they think we can help them.

But for the benefit of writers whom we expect to be working with at writers' conferences, we do admit we counsel writers!

### IDEAS TO THINK ABOUT

The April issue of WORD STUDY, the little publication of the G. & C. Merriam Co., gave its entire space to an interesting recounting of the "Merriam-Webster Story" (how Webster dictionaries are prepared). Business writers might well take a leaf from this "idea" and suggest a similar method for establishing goodwill in their respective fields for other industrial and business firms. It is a good way to build a profitable assignment for one's self as a writer. Many industries have a colorful beginning and subsequent history. There is no reason why a writer can't capitalize on such material. Such birthdays as the 100th, 150th or 200th anniversary of the founding or incorporation make attractive and usable news-pegs on which to "hang" a story.

Eleanor Ramoska, long time member of the WCS Family, commenting on our lead article, in the March issue, about what is happening to fiction, made a cogent point which editors of popular magazines might well take to heart:

"In appraising my own views, strictly as a reader, I regret to say that I have allowed all my subscriptions—which I took out primarily for the magazines' fiction content—to expire. I did this because the stories I found either left me completely cold and unmoved or stirred me so slightly, it was not worth the time and effort.

"I have read a great deal of excellent writing, of which there never seems to be shortage. But it seems so regrettable that writing of this kind should be wasted on trivial and insignificant content. Like designing a fabulously expensive gown to clothe a mere hollow dummy.

"It seems to me that the short story is due for a good revolution and/or (we hope) evolution! Meanwhile, as a reader, I shall sit back and wait. There are still many good novels."

Miss Ramoska, a trained medical secretary in the psychiatric field, reflects, I think, the opinion of many lay readers. Readers on the whole are far ahead of most editors and publishers today as to their realistic thinking in a war-hardened world. This explains, perhaps, much of the dissatisfactions arising from present day television programs.

The N. Y. H-TRIBUNE delving into Department of Commerce statistics, discovered that the average of \$213.00 spent by American householders for informal recreation is surprisingly allotted. Four-fifths goes for do-it-yourself activities. About \$25 for movies, \$6 for spectator sports, \$51 for radio and musical instruments, and \$14 ("more than twice as for all organized sports" for books! Figures such as these do not prove much. Still they do reflect mass trends. Sell reading!



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### FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

#### THE POETS WORKSHOP

The poem for discussion is Grace Stillman Minck's:

##### STUBBORN SOIL

"When Toby goes, I'll leave this stubborn  
land  
For one more gentle to the hungry heart.  
I hate it! Never yet could understand  
Where his devotion to it got its start.  
An Eden? This! This that must take its  
toll  
Of aching labor for its least return;  
Shackles the body, crucifies the soul—  
The place will get him yet--you'd think  
had learn!  
When Toby goes,..." she said. Then, one  
late night  
Toby was host to pain; at last fell lax  
And let his weary spirit loose in flight.  
She raised her head from weeping; took  
the axe  
His hands left idle; as a widow should,  
Saw to it that the shed still had its wood;  
Harnessed the horse and ploughed the loam  
for grain,  
And spoke no idle word ever again.

Many people did their homework this time, so we have a good discussion. I will try to catalogue it accurately and interestingly.. Since encouragement is such good tonic for a poet, let me start by listing what contributors thought of the poem in general. The fact that so many readers were inspired and actually did send in comments, is an indication that they found an interest in it.

Cra Lee Parthesius: "I like the tone, and spirit of this poem."

Caroline Whitson: "Mrs. Minck has an appealing little story to tell."

Clarence C. Adams: "I like this poem very much. It has a story to tell and tells it—nicely."

Shula Hoffman: "I'm fascinated by this poem."

Olive Boynton: "Stubborn Soil' surely has vitality, realism, and immense human interest. One sees the whole setting, and feels the mental action and reaction of the characters. The poem is so much alive in its presentation that I find myself talking back to the characters, consoling poor Toby & chastising the wife."

Joseph Murray Burns: "I think this poem is a fine one and contains a great deal of serious thought."

Myra Burnham Terrell: "The picture is vivid and makes a strong appeal."

Julia Anna Cook: "Except for little technicalities, she seems to express the meaning quite compactly and well."

Doris G. Philbrick: "'Stubborn Soil' I like

so very much, having had experience in battling such soil."

Bessie H. Hartling: "This is a splendid picture poem of rugged soil and rugged souls.. The picture is somewhat grim, but true to the life in its depiction of character, and with a pull to the heart strings, too!"

Encouragement is good medicine but a working poet needs more than that. He wants honest reader reaction no matter whether it is laudatory or not. So here are two more comments:

Margaret Hill Concannon: "It's rather a dismal poem."

Emily May Young: "This has a morbid undertone with its emphasis on the lady 'settlin' 'round waitin' for Toby to die.' This would not make it a popular theme with large circulation markets."

Among those who praised the poem there were also readers who felt the dismal and morbid quality and made suggestions concerning it.

Catherine C. Perry: "This month's poem inspired me to answer. 'Stubborn Soil' leaves me asking, 'Why?' Why did the woman go back to the soil after her diatribe? Did she have no choice? Did she do so for love of her husband? Or did she find that after all she loved the soil? I find no satisfactory answer, except what I would like to think, that after all she loved the farm, and farming."

"The word 'idle' in the last line appears to throw the whole poem off key. Either we have here a woman we do not like, because she was not sincere in what she said, & so lose reader sympathy, or what she said was true, as it surely is, and therefore not an 'idle' word. In that case, the last line should, I think, convey to the reader a sense of that change of feeling, or recognition of her true feeling, for the soil, her genuine love for it in spite of all the hardship, if this is the intent of the author."

Cra Lee Parthesius: "'When Toby goes' almost sounds as if she might be waiting for him to go! Why not, 'If Toby goes,' lines 1 and 9?"

Shula Hoffman: "The idea of the soil holding someone is good, but two things bother me. (1) The woman's waiting for Toby's death so that she may escape. No one enjoys the knowledge that someone is waiting for someone to die in order that the waiter may inherit an estate or wider life, or even to escape the hardships now experienced.

(2) My personal knowledge of farm women, I believe, convinces me that they escape from the farm at the first opportunity if they've been cherishing the idea for any long time. Still I don't object too much to this part"

Mary Alden Campbell: "Toby's illness, and



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death are not done with enough sympathy, to prepare the reader for 'weeping'."

Clive Boynton: "Why, she is almost wishing, yes, hoping, that Toby will go, so she will be free from the dull drudgery of the farm. That thought, and her continual nagging and whining, was the cause of his death, directly or indirectly, as I feel the poem. A poem of such high excellence, I think, should have a whole additional stanza, if necessary, to convey the wife's determination to honor Toby's memory. As the poem stands, she's almost in the criminal class. To make it truly a great poem, I think there should be implicit in her closing line, or stanza, her awakened understanding of Toby's point of view; a recognition of her terrible sin, and of her determination to compensate for it, in so far as she is able."

A really constructive criticism, and here is another.

Emily May Young: "The poem would be better in retrospect—she thinks back how she'd planned to leave, but here she, too, is held by and shackled to the land even as Toby had been. In other words, don't look forward to Toby's death with such obvious pleasure. Put his death in the past tense. Her 'weeping', after such long planning is insincere."

We have our collective fingers on the real trouble with this poem in the above comments, and I think both Miss Boynton's & Miss Young's suggestions are excellent. And to further help Mrs. Minck with the revision, here are suggestions for technical improvement.

Cra Lee Parthesius: "'It' occurs 7 times. Suggest 'a' for the 'its' in line 4; 'the' or 'a' in line 5; 'the' in line 6; 'was stacked with' in line 14 for 'still had its'."

Caroline Whitson almost duplicated the above suggestion with "was stocked with wood"; also Julia Anna Cook offers "made certain", instead of "Saw to it".

My own feeling in the matter is that line 14 should be left to stand as it is. There are too many "its" to be sure, but they are all in the first part of the poem. Why not eliminate some of them in the first 6 lines? Line 14 is so far away that it could afford to have a couple of "its", if there were not already too many in the poem. I would not alter "Saw to it" because that colloquial expression helps to fill in the character and mental picture of the woman. It gives us an easier, clearer picture of herself, and her background. There is a value in the use of a word like "still". It makes us think back to the years Toby supplied the wood. We see the widow not only stacking the shed with wood, this year, but we also see all the other years in relation to her and Toby. "Still" should be retained for those overtones.

Speaking of colloquial expressions, David Leviten finds a flaw in the "constant padd-

ing of phrases; it causes both an over-colloquial and lax diction—"You'd think he'd learn"—and a phrasing both lax and stilted—"was host to pain" and also "let his spirit loose", and finally causes a redundancy: "ever again".

Clarence O. Adams: "The contractions seem awkward. Perhaps dialect excuses them."

Myra Burnham Terrell: "Am I right that contractions are not used in this type of poem? Isn't 'ever' excess?"

Cra Lee Parthesius: "The two contractions are close: 'you'd' and 'he'd'. Might say: 'why can't he?'"

Bessie H. Hartling and Margaret Hill Cannon also objected to the word "host", in connection with pain. Clive Boynton supports Mr. Leviten with the thought that, "And let his weary spirit loose in flight" is trite.

In answer to the question concerning that use of contractions, there is no good cut & dried rule about whether to use them or not. It is a matter of commonsense. In this case the character who is speaking would naturally use contractions, so Mrs. Minck is justified. It would be awkward and stilted, certainly, if this farm woman, Toby's wife, were to come out with something like, "Would you not think he would learn?" In other cases, however, contractions are not suitable. They should be used according to their appropriateness. But I agree with Mr. Adams, there is an awkwardness in that line. Mrs. Parthesius' substitution is a good one. It does not change the character of the woman or setting, yet it reads more smoothly.

In regard to the comments on the word "ever" in the last line. To me it is not superfluous, even though its meaning is repeated in "again". One often repeats for emphasis, and Mrs. Minck is being emphatic here, I am sure. There was some difference of opinion, incidentally, concerning the last line. Some liked it, some did not.

Myra Burnham Terrell: "Sounds tacked on."

Doris G. Philbrick: "I feel that the last two lines are not well balanced in rhythm or in thought."

Cra Lee Parthesius: "I love that last line!"

Clive Boynton: To me the last line sounds like a loose end, almost, irrelevant appendage. Like something tacked on without real thought, for rhyming reasons. Although my sister (Lena Swan) thinks there could not be a mightier line for closing."

For those who like the last line, but think it could read more smoothly, Bessie H. Hartling offers the revision:

"And never spoke an idle word again."

Discussing the poem's ending, Myra Burnham

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Terrell says: "'Loam' does not sound 'stubborn!'"

Julia Anna Cook: "I would like 'soil' used here instead of 'loam' since to a farmer the meaning would be more exact. 'Loam' is something sort of special."

Doris G. Philbrick: "The idea of 'ploughed the loam for grain' shows the necessity, I think, for her effort, but does not credit Toby with any provision for such an emergency. It would seem kind to show that this land had improved from his labor, at least, and had become less stubborn, as also her attitude. Her concession needs reward!"

'Harnessed the horse and ploughed the  
fallow soil,  
Grown smooth and fertile after Toby's toil'

Or.

'Now smooth and mellow, from Toby's toil.'

Caroline Whitson: "I thought 'loam' sounded too rich, and that the naming of a specific crop was unnecessary. Further, since the whole theme seems to call for optimistic outcome, rather than mere resignation, I brought in the religious idea and used 'familiar' in my revision, because it seemed so right even if it does not scan exactly."

'Hitched up the horse and turned the familiar sod,  
Blessed Toby for her farm and thanked God.'

"Familiar" is so right, for its overtones take us back through all the years of Tobys labor. But is "sod" so good? If the land had been ploughed for years, would there be any sod?

Mrs. Whitson's last line seems to express more obviously what Mrs. Minck's last line, I think, expressed subtly.

To go back to line 2, Julia Anna Cook: "The word 'one' implies that she wants to leave, and get away from the country permanently.. Perhaps 'home' would better describe for us her feelings."

Caroline Whitson: "'One' makes it sound as if nations rather than soils were involved. 'For some place with a charitable heart.'"

Olive Boynton: "How about a word indicating nourishing, productive or fertile rather than 'gentle'?"

Lena Swan: "'For one more yielding to the human heart."

Since space will not hold the many criticisms this month, I will try to touch briefly on a few more points. Several readers in their revision comments suggested that "one late night" should be changed to read: "late one night". This helps both the meaning and the emphasis.

Some liked the title. Others said it didn't really express the thought of the poem. For example, Clive Boynton: "In its uneven rhythm you feel yourself stumbling over bumpy, rough ground. The soil of Toby's mind is stubborn, in a faithful, constructive way; the wife's, in a nagging, negative way—stubborn soil indeed. Even so, it seems to me this is not the point of the poem. It is the change of attitude of the wife toward the old farm—a complete metamorphosis."

The rhyme scheme came in for some critical comments. David Leviten expected a sonnet & the additional two lines bothered him. And Clarence C. Adams objected to the change in rhyme scheme.

Concerning markets the following comments and suggestions were made. Caroline Whitson: "I think her trouble has been more in offering it to too-urban and too-sophisticated markets rather than in the poem itself."

Gra Lee Parthesius: "SUCCESSFUL FARMING & IMPROVEMENT ERA would not pay too much, but I believe they would like this."

Bessie H. Hartling: "I would suggest farm magazines."

Myra Burnham Terrell: "Possibly for such a magazine as The COUNTRY POST."

Bill thinks perhaps YANKER, more probably some of the poetry magazines that are interested in ideas and comment on life and character revelation. PRAIRIE SCHOCNER would be a good bet, he thinks.

Workshop poems may be revised and resold, provided the author tells the new editor about the poem being tried out in REWRITE... Otherwise there might be a misunderstanding.

Next time we discuss:

## THE CONCERT

By Julia Anna Cook

With each pure note, wraith-like and thin,  
The master's bow draws from within  
The magic of the violin.

All unconsummated and fair  
Lost loves, old anguishes, are there,  
As Kreisler's music floods the air.

And memories stirred by music's whim  
Wake from a sea of dreams...time-dim.  
This listener...what are dreams to him?

He sits, with bowed head, in his chair,  
Drawn down the years, once more aware  
Of lightfoot loves with tangled hair:

Loves, melody makes his to keep  
Whenever violins shall weep  
And rouse youth's memories from their  
sleep.

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This poem has been to one market, AMERICAN WEAVE. Mrs. Cook's interest in writing commenced in her late teens, but was put aside for marriage and children. Now, though a son is only eleven, she is finding time to create and place many poems, using poetry as a kind of therapy for the incredible pain and anguish of losing her daughter.

We welcome your comments and poems. Each poem we use receives an award of \$1.00. But it must be accompanied when submitted, by a comment on the current poem up for discussion. Deadline for comments and poems is August 10th.

I've just received a comment from Sadie Fuller Seagrave, which, though too late for inclusion, will be forwarded to Mrs. Minck... Mrs. Seagrave thanks you all for your letters of comment on her poem "As the Bough Divines".

## A BOOK OF POEMS

POEMS. Leonie Adams. Funk & Wagnalls Co. \$3. A selection from her two previous books, out of print for many years, plus a more recent harvest. Good writing, but hard to appreciate easily.

## TWO IDEAS TO THINK ABOUT

Long Beach Writers' Club. Here's a trick. Members of the Poetry Group bring a "stockpile" of poems at one meeting from which the Director can choose material for reading at the next meeting. Certain subjects are also discussed, and the members bring carbon copies of poems they have written within such a range. Both good ideas.

Haviland F. Reves. How Many Words? In a letter recently "Hav" quoted a writer in WD who boasted that he had averaged for fifteen years a total of 50,000 words a week. I do not think any writer is wise to let himself be tagged with any such a record. That's hack writing in any man's language, and the editor who knows his business, will not appreciate it, or pay well for it.

Moreover, a writer who drives himself at a pace like that is doing two things: (1) he's burning himself out. Eventually, he will be just a tired old man incapable of doing any work. And (2) turning over ideas that fast, breaks down the ability of the human mind & the emotional system to handle seriously ideas beyond those directly related to familiar patterns or facts. The writer does not, he will soon find out, cultivate his native abilities, or grow in stature. The mind has to be able to work like a battery, charging itself in order to discharge. Such incessant & ceaseless activity destroys its resilience. There is no time for rest or refilling.

That writer does best who tries to do the best writing of which he is capable. We are not all geniuses, but we can take pride in a job well done. In quality, not quantity.

(Cont'd from P. 11)

now. But since the author definitely brought out the fact at the very start that the child feels unloved by her parents and aunt, too, then that, as I see it, is the fundamental, central problem. As I say, I am not familiar at all with juvenile stories, but I wonder if possibly even the youngsters wouldn't as they read the story feel a vague dissatisfaction without knowing just why. To remedy this, I would rewrite the story to bring about a change in the parents' and aunt's attitude, which would have a solid foundation for the child's happiness, which is, basically, what the child really wants."

Right or wrong, that is a good example of the kind of close rationalization all writers have to do, and why workshops like this one are invaluable in helping you to "see" a point and then put it over forcefully & compellingly, intellectually and emotionally. I devised the project for this very reason. I am sorry more writers did not pick up the opportunity. It is something you cannot "buy" or get in the offices of many "critic-agents" who are primarily interested in fees. You have to "love" writing to be really fascinated by this kind of approach to craftsmanship.

Miss Eva T. Hendrickson thinks the visual picture of Mary Beth is not appropriate. She would more likely be a "solemn little child with vaguely troubled eyes, longing for the companionship and sense of being wanted she does not have." Her contrariness also seems "out of harmony. A sensitive child wouldn't be self-assertive... The author shuts her up in a small yard... It isn't contrariness. She wants friends badly enough." But she has "no freedom to be herself... If she were the gay little child the first paragraph indicates, she'd soon have friends enough, the displeasure of the aunt notwithstanding.

"I do not see the point of bringing in the 'boy's birthday party and the admiration of the boy's mother'. Mary is only 5 years old. Mrs. Anderson seems to be making her an adolescent child, beginning to think of boys, and anxious to please."

Now here is an interesting note, the author criticizing her own story. Mrs. Anderson thinks that while this is the story about a child, "it will more likely sell to an adult magazine." A Cinderella plot, but the timely theme "may save the story. Care must be used to keep the MC from looking like an unsympathetic spoiled brat." The author has got to set the stage carefully, to "SHOW Mary as contrary and HOW this trait causes her to be unhappy."

I agree with the comments. The kind lady, I believe, can help Mary, but Mary will not change until her parents' attitude to her is also changed. They must be forced to see the mistake they have made. Their problem is an adult one. Mary's is a juvenile one. Because I hope more writers will join in this workshop, I will save the mag. comments till Sept.



## REWRITE

### "THE EDITOR'S UNEASY CHAIR"

In the last issue we reprinted a personal thumbnail note about Margaret Cousins, managing editor of GOOD HOUSEKEEPING. In this issue we are privileged to publish a letter to us from Miss Cousins. It should interest all our readers, but especially the poets.

Dear Mr. Harris:

I have been reading the Poetry for "Good Housekeeping" off and on for fifteen years, and have many friends among versifiers, who contribute to the popular magazine press. We receive hundreds of poems every month here. We buy about a half-dozen. We have to return so many good poems, simply because we do not have space for them, that I get upset. I hate to send a printed card to a good poet, and a friend. Off and on for years I've written short humorous verse rejecting verses.

I send these to thirty or forty writers of verses that I consider outstanding, but are still not available, in a month. To that extent, they are form letters, but they amuse the poets and break the sting of rejection, which has no reflection on the quality of the work they submit.

They also keep me in personal contact with the most promising poets. I would write personal letters if I could, but I do not have time in this particular facet of my work, especially when every time I get into correspondence with a poet, I get so fond of him, or her, that I write two or three page letters.

Sincerely yours,  
Margaret Cousins

That certainly is a friendly letter, that makes Miss Cousins come alive as an editor & here is one of her amusing rejection letter verses to bring out her sense of humor:

#### SYMPATHY ANYONE?

Oh well I know, as the Ides beset us,  
Better for you a handful of lettuce—  
Brother-or-Sister-Under-the Skin—  
Better a Grand or a C or a Fin;  
Better a buck, samoleon, mickle,  
Two bits, a thin dime or even a nickle,  
Than all my understanding, profound  
& eternal...

I just got one back from the LADIES  
HOME JOURNAL:

With a generous hand Miss Cousins sent us a half-dozen others of her rejection verses. They all express variations of the theme in most writers' hearts, that cash would be an acceptable and welcome gift ("Letter to Santa Claus"). But ("Small Comfort"):

...But wouldn't it be worse,  
If we couldn't write them?

And:

\*Some poems that we make  
Are for their own sweet sake.

### NEWS AT WCS HOUSE

Once again, Elva seems to be the principal topic of conversation here at WCS House. As we went to press she received an acceptance, for the May issue, of a poem from the editors of KALEIDOGRAPH. A few days earlier in Westminster she gave her talk, "Poets Are People", before a women's class of the Baptist Church and was well received.

Also in May Billy rejoiced at being remembered with a souvenir package from Lucerne, Switzerland, by our good friend, Anne Campbell, whose daily poems are published in the Detroit NEWS, and syndicated across America in other newspapers, including the GLOBE in Boston. Bill and Elva were happy that Annet's husband, George Stark, genuinely civic-minded feature writer for The NEWS, received on his birthday the gift of a 2-months' plane-trip to Europe. All of us at the Maine Conference will miss them both at Ocean Park.. They were good company. But the poems & features resulting from such a wonderful trip, will bear watching.

While at Philadelphia for the Philadelphia Regional Conference, Bill and Elva plan, if all goes well to spend a night with Mrs. Rosalie Boyle and her family. And also drop in on Peggie Dowst Redman, associate editor at the SAT. EVE. POST. And get caught up on writing friendships with Margaret Widdemer. If these plans hold, we should have much to tell you in September.

REWRITE is coming to you this month a bit later than we like. Although we got started early, practically the whole of April was devoted to keeping abreast of our WCS work and several personal conferences. In May Lunenburg, like other sections of Massachusetts, established an all-time high for a cold and wet spring. Thirteen (13) inches of rain in about three weeks complicated our schedule, requiring outdoor work in our garden to accumulate and in some cases to be done over, two and three times. Lawn-mowing, weeding & planting, for instance. Paul Bunyan would've blushed at his understatements, if he could have looked at an inch-thick stalk of asparagus that hid out in our grape arbor & surmounted it by several inches! Almost 5 feet! Where a hen runway used to be.

On a lovely sunny day, just as we finished closing REWRITE up, Bill and Elva visited the spring (joint) meeting of the Wachusett & the Bay Path Library Groups in near-by Lancaster, a beautiful old New England town. A stimulating occasion.

J.T. George Trade News Service, 703 N. Mason, Bowie, Texas, states it is in the market for photos "showing unusual or revolutionary merchandising methods. Payment, \$2-\$10 for most, in about 2 months or less. Also: articles or items of interest in the commercial and business worlds. Rates from a fraction of a cent to several cents. This firm is new to us. We are checking on it.

## REWRITE

### NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

Florence Anderson, after being awarded the \$1 prize in the last Fiction Workshop, wrote us plaintively: "Must I criticize this workshop exercise?" That's a neat question. Should a writer be required to do a criticism of his own ms. in order to compete in the next assignment. Being the hard hearted creative teacher, I suggested that a writer's comment after he saw his baby in print, might be very "enlightening to other writers". The point of view would certainly have changed, I think.

REPORT TO WRITERS has suspended.

The Publisher's Desk of the RURAL NEW YORKER recently warned its readers to enter puzzle contests for fun and profit only if they are lucky. This editor believes contests to be honestly conducted, otherwise a stop would be slapped on them, by the postal authorities. But in one case it was pointed out that a new contest was started before a preceding one was finished, and this earlier one was drawn out by many tie-breaking additions. In another contest, it was necessary for a contestant to buy books. A lot, too!

The centered boxes on this page present some opposing comments of interest to writers of books. They of course are culled from a column written by Pyke Johnson, Jr., publicity writer for Doubleday & Co. It is run as paid advertising, in the SATURDAY REVIEW.

We try to bring you provocative news, comment or practical help & information wherever we see it or from whatever source it is available. We try to make REWRITE stimulate you and make you think. Sometimes we succeed and sometimes we don't. That is the fate of editors and—writers. You can't tell each and every time which is which. In a good many cases, the results are likely to surprise you. The main thing is to keep trying.

Some of our best attempts to aid you we owe to inspired friends. We always appreciate and read clips, which some of you send to us. So, don't be afraid to send along the tearsheets that have helped you. But be sure to give us the source and the date when used.

In line with this clip I believe it is always valuable for writers to see how the editorial minds in the offices they try to hit, work. It makes your aim sharper.

A Lutheran Writers' Workshop, sponsored by the Board for Parish Education, of the Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis 18, Mo., in co-operation with Concordia Teachers' College, River Forest, Ill., will be held June 21 to July 2nd. It is initiated, it is stated, to "meet a growing need for trained writers in the Church." It will include courses in techniques of writing, religion and journalism and journalistic needs of the Church.

#### THE WRITER

The toughest book for a novelist to write is frequently not the first, but the second.

¶ Almost anybody can write one novel (and a glance at our incoming manuscripts room sometimes suggests that everybody has), but to go the route twice takes a special ability. This is particularly true if the first book has been published and had a great success.

PARISH EDUCATION, one of the official church publications of Concordia Publishing House (The Lutheran Church), is being replaced by ADVANCE, Rev. Elmer A. Kettner, St. Louis 18, Mo.

The chief purpose of this change will result in a widening of the editorial "slant" since the paper will permit the Departments of Missions, Stewardship and Parish Education to "present and promote a unified" program of "Kingdom work on the parish level."

#### THE EDITOR

The job of the editor of a novel is one of the aspects of book publishing least understood by outsiders. To many persons, including some would-be writers, the editor is a genius who has but to wave a blue pencil over a manuscript, and, presto, there is a work of art. This picture is pleasant to contemplate; unfortunately it is not true.

¶ A successful relationship between an author and editor must be basically that of two friends. Like any human relationship, this one allows all degrees of intimacy and intensity. The editor may be father-confessor, wise friend, drinking companion, or he may be none of these. A good editor does anything for his author except one thing: he does not write his book.

¶ The writer's task is a demanding one, and a private one. While a novel is being written, it is the editor's job to sustain his writer: to encourage him, to serve as his sounding board, to aid in amending his mistakes, or to leave him alone; but, finally, to say to him—your book should now be published. For, as every editor knows, publication is the greatest writing teacher of all.

¶ In deciding when to publish, the editor must consider two factors above all others. He must first ask whether an author can work further on his book without harming it and even endangering his future career.

¶ His second decision is made on behalf of the publisher. The editor picks the time when a novel, either as a finished work, or as an imperfect product but an important stage in an author's development, represents a reasonable business venture for his firm.

¶ These decisions constitute the crucial part of the editor's job. The best editor concentrates on learning to make them wisely. And he does not worry about "discovering" writers, for he knows that no one may discover a writer but the writer himself.

**L. L. Day**  
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

This is creative editing!

The excerpts printed below offer a valuable background picture of the Catholic Press. Also a market list.

Again this year, February has been designated as Catholic Press Month. As in past years, the Catholic Press Association sponsors the annual observance of Catholic Press Month in order to emphasize the important role of Catholic publications in the life of the Church in the United States. Catholic Press Association, 150 East 39th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

Through its member publications and publishers, the Catholic Press Association provides a wide variety of promotional literature including its official poster, sermon outlines, fact sheets, a playlet for students and other data on the Catholic Press.

A complete list of Catholic magazines and newspapers can be found only in the latest edition of the Catholic Press Directory. This 120-page directory carries extensive information on Catholic periodicals, including their addresses. For Catholic Press Month users the cost is only two dollars. Write to the Catholic Press Association at the New York address.

You will likely be amazed at the size of the Catholic Press in the United States. There are now over 550 Catholic periodical publications in this country. Of this number only 100 are weekly newspapers, mostly the official newspapers of the various dioceses. With some few exceptions Catholic magazines and newspapers are owned and controlled either by the bishops or by religious communities. Probably the two best known that are under lay control are The Commonweal and Jubilee.

The combined circulation of Catholic magazines and newspapers now totals close to 19 million. This figure is nearly three times as high as in 1925, while the Catholic population in the same period has risen only from 18 to 30 million. Someone has been doing a fine job of selling Catholic publications to our people. But there is still a great deal more to be done. If only 19 million copies are spread among 30 million people it is evident that 40 per cent do not receive even one publication. Actually more than 40 per cent, because informal surveys of Catholic homes show that while some homes have several, many Catholic families never read a Catholic magazine or newspaper. Even in those Catholic homes which show the most interest in the Catholic Press, you frequently find 5 secular magazines to every Catholic publication; the average is 7 to 1.

Fr. Albert Bauman, ST. JOSEPH MAG.

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### A NEW SPORTS MARKET

**GOLF GRAPHIC**, Jack B. Cherwin, 278 Clinton Place, Newark 8, N. J., a monthly, announces it is an expanding market. Formerly regional, it is now national in circulation. It is not sold on newsstands, but entirely by subscription. (Send 6¢ in stamps for two recent issues. Outline of policies is included.)

It is an instruction, how-to-do-it book & everything must be tied closely to this editorial policy. This means features must be built around the "secrets" of golfing great players, not mere personality sketches. And the instruction articles must be step-step pieces, photos with captions that will show the average golfer how to do it. Magazine is aimed at the mass golf audience.

The magazine has been expanded 48 pages or more and Mr. Cherwin will welcome freelance writers capable of hitting this field. Payment: \$25.00 for regular features; \$3 to \$5 for photos or sketches. And \$5 to \$15 is to be expected for short items. Reports, it is stated, in one week usually. Query when you have an idea for a feature. Length: prefers not over 2,000 words. But 3,000 and a longer feature than can be broken into a series can be used occasionally. But I believe the beginning writer for this market should try shorter lengths first.

The "editorial requirements bulletin" is a model 2-page specific question and answer—well organized—sheet. Other editors should study it!

**SPIRIT**, published by—The Catholic Poetry Society, 386 4th Ave., NYC 16, celebrated a 20th anniversary in May.

**The Universal Copyright Convention**. There is now before Congress the matter of enacting by ratification of the UCC. It was signed in Geneva on Sept. 6, 1952. This is an important piece of legislation. For writers need the wider protection in all countries, which are signatories of the pact, and over a longer time than our own copyright legislation now gives. The only question that is at stake is a slight modification in the manufacturing clause. This deals only with the medium of books.

In order to bring our own laws into similarity with those governing the Convention, (i. e., the slight amending of the manufacturing clause so as to grant automatic copyright to all works bearing the symbol of the Convention) it is necessary that S. 2559, & H.R. 6670 and H.R. 6616 be passed. The three bills have been referred to the Committees, in the House and Senate, on the Judiciary. A crowded calendar could mean they would fail to be considered, and so would die.

Every writer should urge his congressional representatives to ask that this legislation be acted upon. It has the vigorous approval of the Eisenhower Administration.

### SOME NEWS TO THINK ABOUT

An unusual gimmick was added to a reading and autographing evening by George Abbe, who distributed a sheet of the selected poems & included on it the amount paid him by those editors responsible for the original publication. Our thanks to Kitty Parsons Recchia who introduced him at the Newton, Mass. Public Library, for a copy of this information of considerable interest and value to poets.

The Children's Theater Institute, Dept. of Speech, Michigan State College, East Lansing, Mich., sent us quite a budget of news. (1) The Children's Theater Institute, Aug. 2-20, courses in techniques of production, storytelling. (2) The Children's Theater Conference, Aug. 23-28. (The Institute will ready a play for the Conference, and give academic credit.) A 5-day workshop. (3) The American Educational Theater Association, parent organization of the CTC, will follow with another Conference, Aug. 29-31. "Production Problems for Town and Gown."

**The Unwanted Ms.** I wish I could tell each and every one of you personally how often a ms. comes in here, or someone writes to us, telling about a ms. for which there is very clearly no possible market.

I could give you a great many citations of practical examples. But right here I should like to make only one point: the book ms. a writer takes a great deal of pains writing, but which when finished falls into no category publishers are commonly willing to put money on. The very short ms., for instance, or the purely local feature; or the ms. that flaunts all common appeal gimmicks for mass audiences. (This latter is particularly important in this day of 100,000 copy editions of soft cover paper backs.)

Every year at summer conferences and other meetings, I hear speakers stress the necessity of writing for one's self, of "being true to one's own individuality and art." I am the first to agree. Much of our work has to do with bringing out an author's own individual "message", a flatulent, pretentious word if there ever was one. You are unique, but if you are going to write to be read, it does not hurt one's integrity or Art at all to try to meet the editor and reader in the middle of the gulf that separates you. Too many writers insist the reader come all the way. A good salesman understands and is very sympathetic to his prospect. That is why we tell you to "read the book" and know who is going to buy it. You can still be original, unique within the practical limitations of a specialized medium. Editors have to be practical, or get out of business. Why not the same thing for writers.

**CHICAGO REVIEW**, Franklin Neil Karmatz, Reynolds Club, Univ. of Chicago, Chicago 37 Ill., sent us a promotion letter recently. Eight years old, it is a literary magazine, quarterly publication. Fiction, poems, essays.



## REWRITE

### THE FICTION WORKSHOP

This Fiction Workshop has confirmed something I have long known about fiction writers. They are not particularly interested in fiction technique except as it helps them to whip through a story and sell it. For us at WCS House technique is, naturally, a means to an end, never an end in itself. But we consider technique very important, far more important than, we have found, most writers of stories do.

The point is that writing is communication with a reader and thousands or millions upon millions of readers. If you have only a casual and sleazy idea of how to communicate a story and ideas and emotions, how do you expect to control your readers? As we have often said: "If you cannot write well, & make your reader respond the way you want him to, how can you ever expect to sell? An Idea, a Purpose, a Plan, and the Power to put over your story or message are essential.

Only 5 writers saw the importance of performing the practice project I drew up with a good deal of thought for the welfare of a great many hundreds of writers. This month's Workshop project (to select an enjoyable published story, then comment on it both favorably and critically, was designed to help a writer see how well he understood the fundamentals of technique and could apply them.. It also showed me that few writers evidently really read the magazines they hope to sell, or do this critically enough to be in a position to communicate to the readers in a professional manner. They just shoot wild.

NOTE: the Sept. Workshop will consist of a Dramatic Scene in the published story you've chosen for the June Workshop. You are to do it in your own words. The situation of it can be identical with the one in the story, or you can introduce variations of theme or of scene. The main thing is to digest the story, put it out of sight and write as creatively as you can. And remember, you will be the biggest gainer from entering and trying your best on these workshop exercises. You will write better fiction just for trying.

The deadlines: May 10th and August 10th.. May 10th for the story report; Aug. 10th for the original dramatic scene. Go to it! Luck. I'll pay \$1 for the ms. I use. Send SASE!

I sincerely hope that a large group of additional writers will (1) choose a story, (2) comment on it, and (3) then putting outside of reach the published version, do a scene, identical or original, based on the story. A fine way to improve their writing. Although the June project is now past, I will undertake to read all of these late entries, and the scenes that are turned in for the Sept. Workshop. I am that much interested in your success!

Remember: A helpful comment of the current Workshop entry (printed below) MUST be sent with each ms. and tear sheet submitted in the June Workshop. Read this rule & those above again! And be sure to enter! Send a return, stamped, self-addressed envelop for my reply.

The comments on Mrs. Florence A. Anderson's "unforgettable character" were constructive and helpful. Jacqueline Tweton did not think

a 5-year old would "pay much attention to a 'dull repetition of the same colors', etc." She also thought the final scene was weak. A "great stress must be placed on Mary Beth's misbehavior among children early in the story, if this ending is to be logical, and an interesting contrast to her previous behavior." Miss Tweton added other valuable comments; they've been forwarded to the author. I regret pressure of space because of the news we are printing, prevents reprinting of Mrs. Anderson's ms. You will find it in the March issue. There was a tremendous rush of news, right after our usual deadline, which other writers' magazines will not be able to print till July. So we are giving it an exclusive coverage in June!

Gra Lee Parthesius also wrote a long, detailed analysis of Mrs. Anderson's character sketch. She suggested that the story show with dramatic bits of action how unloved the child feels. (She devised a number of promising suggestive ways for doing this.)

"I have noticed in other unforgettable character sketches something is said about probable future developments. What does the author think will happen to Mary Beth? Will her parents finally realize their obligation to their daughter? Will she have to seize on some understanding teacher or friend?" That is a fundamental approach to the story purpose. As is Gra's thought that this is perhaps not a juvenile story, but a child-story for grown-ups. The author is free to select her readers, but she must jump clearly one side of the fence or the other.

Lillian Malloy wrote a very detailed analysis. Again, I wish I could reprint in full. Those who did take part in this project did the best work we have ever had in this workshop. They helped Mrs. Anderson greatly and themselves in doing so much creative thinking. Mrs. Malloy liked the way we saw visually and emotionally the child and why this child behaves as she does.

She thinks the child should be less 'out' and that this would make her more sympathetic. An interesting question to ponder. I am not sure she is right, or what all the angles are in respect to this problem. Mrs. Malloy also raises the question whether Mary Beth's actions are "in character". What do you believe? Would a sensitive child react by the passive manner of withdrawal, day-dreaming, "lying" (imaginative tales), etc. instead of aggressive "fits" and tantrums? Good theory! The author should know the answer whichever choice she makes.

Mrs. Malloy feels a vague dissatisfaction with the story's ending. "Since basically, I think the child's unhappiness is due to her parents lack of love, the problem hasn't been solved satisfactorily. The situation is improved, but only superficially... It depends on the author's point. If it is merely acquisition of friends and their approval as a substitute, then the story is fine as it stands.

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along with editors. You cannot throw around your weight as if you were the "big I am". A writer, strange as it may seem in a profession that is thought to be so lonely, never gives up serving others, his readers. So if you really wish to experiment out of bounds, the thing to do is to write your money-making stuff with one hand, and with the other write for the literary and experimental magazines.

Charles Rawlings told eloquently last summer at the Maine Writers' Conference, where he is again scheduled to speak in August, about his restlessness. And of his everlasting desire to write something that would be remembered beyond his lifetime, an ambition REWRITE has heard repeated by other authors during the winter. Charley told also of his agent telling him once: "If you want to write off-trail stuff, go ahead and do it, but do not tell me about it." That is one of the—what you might call—hazards of slick writing. Editors and writers who become too conscious of the tremendous capital investment behind them, tend to think only in terms of what's conventionally acceptable, the safe thing vs. the risky new and untried. That road carries one straight to sterility, if it is allowed to dominate one's inclination and thinking.

For that reason, I know of many writers & big name authors, who write in terms of the thousands of dollars commercial publications imply, and at the same time "give away" the experimental stuff they also do, to the literary magazines. Others, for business & professional reasons, use pen-names to accomplish practically the same results. Again, still others develop outside interests which permit them to widen their creative thinking. A good example is Louis Bromfield. Farming and conservation of the land are his avocations. Kenneth Roberts has told eloquently of what enormous help to him both Ben Ames Williams and Booth Tarkington were in helping him to lick problems in some of his great books. I have seen Williams spend a great deal of his valuable time and energy discussing writing problems with writers. He was doing it with the keen knowledge that it was good for him as well as them. Charley Rawlings said that right out at Ocean Park last summer.

What it amounts to is that not experimentation, but the inescapable needs of nature to grow, grow, grow right up to the moment of death is the important thing in an author's life. I have told in REWRITE several times, as older readers will recall, about Charles H. Woodbury, the great marine painter, trying all kinds of experiments and practicing even though he had been painting for a period of more than forty years. Character and enthusiasm for one's world and his craft, a healthy curiosity, a zest for living and for projecting your ideas, emotions, and interests, so they will entertain and help readers, these are the factors that will enable you to become a successful writer. And what comes first, the hen, or the egg, character or being a true experimenter, is immaterial.

## DO THEY GIVE FULL VALUE? THAT'S THE TEST!

The National Writers' Club in its second-quarter issue of its bulletin, "Authorship", has a striking article, "Hoax or Service?". This is a hard-bitten factual analysis of a situation REWRITE has attacked for years. I refer to what NWC clearly points out is the willingness of three out of four trade publications for writers to accept questionable advertising with "little inclination to look under the cover of the glowing promises, to find the unpleasant facts." (Note: The Writer is exempted in part from this analysis because it limits its advertising, so that it accepts none from agents, but does allow correspondence schools and one vanity publisher to run small ads. REWRITE is specifically and completely exempted because it never has accepted any advertising, a matter that has been fixed policy from the first issue.)

The main line of reproach, however, falls on the subsidy and vanity publishers, which the article declares, victimize both readers and writers by offering books that "the publisher, at least, knows are far short of the standards of regular trade publishers." The article specifically charges the vanity publishers with printing smaller editions often than promised; not bothering to bind all of the few copies actually printed in covers & misrepresenting the amount of advertising & claiming that some royalty-paid books are in reality subsidy jobs!

The article closes with the following paragraph, to which REWRITE heartily subscribes since it has been the cornerstone of policy for this magazine for almost 14 years:

The NWC staff has no desire to cast suspicion on any honest and helpful writer's service, but they consider it their duty to report on questionable schemes by agents who advertise, on the incompetence of critics and schools who need to meet no educational standards but simply to place an advertisement, and on any service or product offered to writers that may be of dubious value.

"Authorship" is also conducting a survey, to which editors and publishers are asked to reply, with regard to the problem of submission of mss. by free lance writers, and the relation to this problem of agents, writers schools and services. Needless to say, here at WCS House we have always backed up NWC on any practical matter such as this, and have on a number of occasions made our specialized experience and knowledge of the facts available to the staff of the National Writers' Club.

REWRITE believes wholeheartedly that more respect for free lance writers is due on the part of editors & publishers. But paradoxically, writers must earn that respect by an earnest attempt to "increase the quality of writing and professional standards among (the entire range of) free lance writers." Doing this among a few is not enough. Intelligent

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and willing cooperation by all ranks of the writing profession is necessary. The labor unions have been able to enforce their call for better working conditions only when they are (1) strong; when (2) their demands seem reasonable, and (3) and worked toward better living for the whole nation, not the unfair self-interest of the few. The Authors' League of America, although it does not welcome, seemingly, the small part-time writer in its membership; and The National Writers Club which does, are steps in the right direction. But neither can do its best work until it's backed by the fire and determination of all local writers' clubs and all individual writers in the twin policy of improving quality of performance, and earning, or demanding, a greater measure of respect from editors and publishers. REWRITE yearns for and works for that happy day to come to pass.

"How Much Work Should Be Done 'On Spec'?" It is interesting to see that another editor is thinking along these same lines. Jessyca Russell, WRITERS' NEWSLETTER, recently gave editorial space to the above question. She points out that READER'S DIGEST and REDBOOK give "\$250 for a 'first look' at a finished ms." (I have always understood THIS WEEK is also more generous, if given the same preference. Ed.) Of course Miss Russell slanted her remarks primarily at professional writers, which, she assumed, most of her regular readers are. And she advised them that they should not invest both time and money under such conditions, "unless you have an arrangement to be paid for the initial work", based on a "firm commitment and 'go-ahead'" as result of showing them no more than perhaps a first paragraph and outline.

Of course writing is an intangible, and I doubt that such pleasant premises would apply to less experienced free lances. But again, if writers could somehow unite to increase the quality of mss. submitted & bring greater teamwork and strength to bear, they would have more bargaining power. Then the accepted practices of the trade might easily be altered. At present the tactical "advantages" are all on the side of editors.

### A CONFERENCE BILL & ELVA LIKED

League of Vermont Writers, Vera A. Perkins, sec., 242 So. Main St., Rutland, Vt., holds a lively 2-day Institute, July 13th & 14th. Good speakers, friendly writers and talk. If you plan to be in the area, contact Vera. A program will be available early in June. The club has a winter meeting and sends out the periodic news sheet that many of us enjoy reading. All for a very nominal membership fee. But membership or not, you are always happily welcomed at the summer institute. And UVM, Elva's old alma mater at Burlington, is a fine host. We stayed for two years & loved every moment of it.

St. Anthony Messenger, 1615 Republic St., Cincinnati 10 Ohio, has a good itemized rejection slip to tell about its ms. needs.

## HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Rosalie Boyle

Poems: SAT. EVE. POST, KALEIDOGRAPH, AMERICAN WEAVE, N.Y. TIMES, Wash. STAR.

Helen Langworthy

Articles: Grand Rapids PRESS, PEN MONEY.

Beverly Harris

Short story: TODAY'S SECRETARY.

Julia Anna Cook

Poems: CHURCH WORLD (several), Meredith Willson Program (NBC), PARISH VISITOR, HIGHLIGHTS FOR CHILDREN, COUNTRY POST, Birmingham NEWS Monthly, Boston GLOBE and POST.

Key Lill

Children's Song (Reprint): The Augustana Book Concern.

Mary Witherbee

Story: FAITH TODAY.

Emily May Young

Poems: St. Joseph's News Press, Weekly UNITY, The CHOIR LEADER, BLUE MOON, etc.

Dorothy Holman

Articles: The AMERICAN AGRICULTURIST.

Phyllis H. Clark

Article: Methodist Publishing House.

Frances Durland

Short Story: CHRISTIAN HOME. And also a reprint by LANTERN PRESS & Evang. Press.

Doris Marston

Poem: CHILD LIFE.

Marjorie S. Scheuer

Poems: TALARIA, CAT, Wall St. JOURNAL & Boston HERALD.

Irving Ziemann

Poems: Boston HERALD.

Ber Temple

Short Shorts: Boston POST.

Florence M. Davis

Serial: WEE WISDOM.

Note: send in your news. The news in this column often helps writers to make new sales and they also help us to make profitable suggestions, too. This is something we like to do. And we do it whenever we get a bright idea. Sales generate sales, you know.

MASTER LIST & CLASSIFICATION OF INTERJECTIONS. Dr. Clyde Crobaugh, Room 126, College of Business Building, Univ. of Tenn. Knoxville, Tenn. \$1. An alphabetically arranged list that should be very useful to writers, especially of fiction. Some seem a bit forced but have been used, I am certain. It is complete, I would think, in a wide range. One of those tools writers often find handy.



## REWRITE

### WRITING THE FEATURE ARTICLE

Almost everyone seriously interested in the business of writing agrees that there's one fundamental basis for catching & holding the reader's attention. This is not a "formula" in the sense that most inexperienced writers use the word: a ready-made and stereotyped, i.e., artificial recipe for whatever they're hoping to write. Rather it is a form derived from a thorough understanding of reader-psychology and the art of presenting material simply, efficiently and forcefully. Incidentally, those who understand this working principle, come to realize the complete falsity of that old cliché, namely, the untrue half-truth that "those who can, write, & those who can't—teach." Not all teachers—teaching being primarily an intellectual occupation—are creative. But teaching is one of the best ways to learn how to organize a story or set of facts; and also to hold attention. That is one reason, aside from the financial security and fair amount of unused free time, why so many teachers are writers on the side, and so many writers earn a living first by teaching. A reasonable practice apprenticeship spent in teaching, newspaper work or some similarly methodical profession, can be one of the best preparatory exercises a writer can experience.

But getting back to the "form" I spoke about, it is a curious thing that in most of the writers' magazines, textbooks, etc., it receives much better expounding in the fiction field than that of the article and feature story. Yet fundamentally, this form is very much the same for either type of writing. As I have often told writers the difference between fiction and non-fiction is a technical one. You write an article from an assemblage of facts you have gathered. They are all given to you, or come to you. Your principal task is to organize them, & color them with your "spire of meaning" or implication tag and personal enthusiasm for them.

When you write a story on the other hand, you develop the facts and premises. A reader judges their authenticity by comparing & holding them up beside his or her knowledge of life. Yet the fact remains the facts all flow out of you, not into you and then out, neatly arranged. You grow your own raw product, as it were, instead of importing it. A vitally different approach to the material, therefore, is made by the fiction writer and the article writer. And this is perhaps the principal difference—between the two. Also it explains why some writers can never seem to scale the wall that separates them.

Let us examine for a moment the more familiar spirit, the fiction "formula". First, you present an interesting Main Character & "sell" him to the reader, so that the latter takes an active interest in him. Second, you raise a serious and dramatic problem in the life of the MC. Third, you develop conflict as a result of this problem. You show clearly the two alternatives facing the MC.

He is pulled between what he would like and what he knows he must do. He faces a choice and the inevitable, inexorable decision has to be faced. But for a time the MC puts off and evades it. The reader gets a thoroughly integrated look at all facets of the problem. (This is important to understand, because a feature writer, as we shall see, does exactly the same thing.)

Fourth, the MC at last finds he must jump one way or the other. The Decisive Act that throws the story one way or the other, must be faced. The delicately balanced forces are permitted by the author to slip and the fulcrum becomes top-heavy on one side and topples down. Looking at it from the MC's viewpoint, the two-way relationship has cleared itself and the MC knows definitely what has to be done.

The fifth step is more or less automatic. The decision having been made, the outcome, the arrival at the satisfactory ending, becomes a more or less routine operation. The author merely has to tie up the threads. He does it as quickly and competently and emotionally as he can. This is what the writer of a feature article calls the conclusion.

Now let us look at the form of the article in comparison with this "formula" that we've just considered. The feature writer has the job of catching and holding the interest of a reader exactly as does the fiction author. He writes a "lead" that is exciting, arresting. He suggests that "this might happen to you". He does this by presenting a problem, or telling a "story", a true story. His accent is on the problem rather than the MC. A reader, however, wishes to identify himself with the subject. So the author raises some character, either a personality or institution the reader can identify himself with.

Let us take an actual example. The Town of Lunenburg recently built a million dollar elementary school. This started as a 16-room building. Before it was finished another set of 8 rooms had to be added to accommodate our flood of children. Now the Town is facing a necessary and inescapable addition to, or a complete new high school. Another million—in a suburban town that has no large income from business taxes. A terrifying thought, a situation that is being faced, relatively, by many other communities.

There is your "news-peg" of timeliness, of universal application. The Town becomes the personality that the reader can identify, & will instinctively identify himself with. At the same time you have the terrific, frightening problem of the new school that raises suspense. What will the Town do? What would I do if I were in that spot, asks the reader of himself? There is a hook there for every person who pays taxes, and for parents, who take seriously the problem of children's education. In fiction or non-fiction we try to build that hook, baited with interest and irresistible suspense, i.e., fear of fate.

## REWRITE

Now let us go back to the common formula. In fiction the third step is conflict. In a feature article we use the same thing in an entirely different manner. The reader wants to know and understand all the aspects, and facets of the problem the article discusses for him. You remember I said that the viewpoint of the author toward his material was different in fiction and non-fiction. Well, in the same way the point of view of a reader toward conflict in the story and the article differs. In the story conflict is between two characters in the action. And the reader, although identifying himself with an MC, is substantially outside the story circle.

In non-fiction on the contrary, the relationship of the conflict is quite different from that in the story. Its purpose is primarily focussed on the reader. It is needed to bring out the fullest possible discussion of the central problem. Instead of the MC's facing two alternatives, this or that, your reader desires to see visually all the possible alternatives that can be selected. The reader is also more willing to go back into the past and review what led up to the problem. In a very real sense the reader of the article is making the decisive act in a feature article, because most features are intended to put readers in better touch with a news situation.

Thus the conflict in the article about the story we are building about the school problem in Lunenburg would bring out the events that led up to the Town having such a growth in the school population. And also the various alternatives from which the tax-payers can choose. In other words, a discussion of the post-war increase in babies, the alternatives of no new school, repairs of existing facilities, a regional school, subletting to some other city or town the task the Town now handles for itself, of supplying a high school. And finally, the possibility of building a new building.

The fourth step would be to describe eloquently the Decisive Act that the Town must face, with the summary of what appears to be the present sentiment pro and con among the citizens. Here again, we note the different approaches of fiction and non-fiction. The article writer does not have to show the actual decisive action the Town takes. Later news stories can handle that and the "solution" the Town works out. The feature writer is concerned only with situation. Actually, what makes his story timely is a news-peg such as the fact that tomorrow, let's say, the School Committee is holding an open meeting, or a special Town Meeting has been called to consider raising the money. In other words, the Town faces the decisive act. The towns people and their neighbors are interested in what must be done. The Town lives the decisive act and the outcome, whereas in a fiction story the author would have to be God and work them out in a manner he thinks is logical.

Do you see from this practical discussion of a theoretical story, how similar are the forms on which you construct a fiction story and a feature article? That is why we at REWRITE and WCS House emphasize the identical fundamentals for almost every specialized type of writing. Fundamentals which seem to be universally true, because they "grow" not out of artificial rules, but from reader reactions to material. They are a means, not an end in themselves. A means of aiding the reader to become acquainted with ideas, and to understand them as easily as it's humanly possible for him to do.

Finally, notice that in both fiction & article writing successful writing grows from imaginative study by the author of the two-way relationships between the characters or forces at work in the material. In a story, for example, our plot emanates from how the MC feels towards all of the other characters and they towards him. In our story of Lunenburg, the interest in the article will necessarily depend on how well we explore what Town's reaction is to the various solutions to the problem, and what effect these might have on the Town, its citizens, its parents and schoolchildren, not to mention the possible finances of all parties concerned. You see how successful writing depends on finding and working out convincingly and interestingly the basic emotional relationships, which are inherent in your material? Solve that and you will reduce enormously the rejection factors that have been holding your writing progress back.

## WE HOPE TO COVER TWO CONFERENCES

Bill and Elva hope this year to give good coverage of two conferences for our REWRITE readers. Bill is on the staff at both Philadelphia Regional Conference, June 16-18th, and at the Maine Writers' Conference, August 25-27th. Elva expects to be at Philadelphia and she and perhaps Billy hope to be at the Ocean Park gathering. Billy, who will be 9, insists he is going to see what Papa really does at conferences. But the nearness of an expanse of sandy beach and ocean is an extra attraction.

The PRC, now in its 6th year at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, is a great experience. This will be Bill's third year. Not tied to leading any special group, he will be helping individual writers in personal sessions and answering specific questions that don't always get answered in the rush of the continuous schedule of talks.

A practically complete new list of speakers, all well known writers and editors, is announced. We are looking forward especially to Margaret Widdemer, with whom we worked at Durham. She is leading Poetry.

The Maine list is not ready in print as I write this, but Bill is scheduled in several interesting panels, and Charles Rawlings is returning. A S.E.PCST man, he's swell.

## REWRITE

### ALBERT R. KORN AWARD FOR QUATRAINS

Prizes of \$15, \$10 and \$5 will be awarded by Albert Ralph Korn in a contest for Quatrains. The prize winning poems will be published in REWRITE Magazine.

All poets are eligible. There are no fees or other special requirements to enter. The author may choose his own subject. Entries are limited to one quatrain. Submit poems, please, anonymously, in triplicate, and accompanied by a separate, sealed envelop containing the name and address of the author, on the inside, and the title of the poem on the outside.

Contest closes January 15, 1955. All poems are to be unpublished and typewritten.. No poems will be returned and no responsibility will be incurred for the loss of mss. So authors should retain copies of entries. The judges will be announced at the end of contest. Full report in REWRITE, March issue.

The three winning poems will be published in REWRITE. These may be republished in anthologies or elsewhere, if credit for first publication in REWRITE is given. All rights to all entries submitted in the Contest remain with the respective authors. Send entries to: Elva Ray Harris, REWRITE Magazine, 50 West St., Lunenburg, Mass.

### EDITORS WON'T WRITE IT FOR YOU!

One of our good friends, Mary W., in giving us a report about a sale she had recently made, added a priceless bit of wisdom:

"I could use several more checks like it. But then I chat volubly to myself in the bath, saying, 'How can you sell what you don't—write! Get your teeth in while you have your own!'"

Now isn't that the truth!

### A SMALL FICTION MARKET

LOGIC, R. S. Craggs, 25 McMillan Ave. West Hill, Ontario, Canada, which has been edited as a mail-order publication, is gradually being re-slanted to have an individuality of its own. Mr. Craggs writes, "While it may be years before the mail-order contacts are dropped entirely, these will become relatively insignificant as the size and circulation of LOGIC increase."

Fiction is now being used. "A token payment of \$5.00 for 900-word stories with a strong plot is being offered. On acceptance. No experimental writing wanted."

The magazine will devote considerable space to hobby pursuits, but as no payment can be offered, this is not being solicited. It is hoped later that an editorial cartoonist can be added, with nominal pay. Main concentration will be on the political-economic line, including Freethought. Send stamp for a copy.

### A WORD TO THE WISE

Poets Attention! GOOD HOUSEKEEPING, 57th & Eighth Ave., NYC 19, has recently published a "Poetry Dividend" page in addition to the regular Poetry Page. This increases the number of poems that can be accepted by six or so. The pay being exceptionally high, poets should be greatly heartened by this encouraging development.

We believe a note of appreciation to Miss Margaret Cousins, the managing editor, would be very much in order. Do it yourself & get your friends to do it. Letters from writers' clubs would especially carry weight. On and off over the years, Miss Cousins has read a good deal of the verse submitted herself. It is only common courtesy when an editor thus encourages writers in this way, for writers to let her know they have noticed her kindness, and are grateful. Sincere and friendly commendation sometimes strengthens editors' hands in the face of a cautious publisher. At the very least it warms the editor's heart. And it serves to identify you as one whom the editor will remember. It certainly does not hurt your chances of selling, when and if you can come up with a ms. the editor really wants.

Closely in line with the policy suggested above, of showing your approval and expressing your appreciation of fine work by editors, is the Christopher pamphlet, which was substituted in March for the regular monthly News Notes. This pamphlet is intended, I believe, for long time circulation. Its entitled, "Your Right to Accept or Reject". It is an exhaustive summary of the problems of censorship and community or individual protest against immoral entertainment of every type.

The Christophers apparently are against a rigid censorship, preferring the free exercise of natural good taste. But where such a voluntary means of policing books, magazines, newspapers, movies, radio, TV, comics, etc., falls down and leads to the encouragement of unwholesome influences upon community life, Fr. Keller is strongly in favor of a censorship with teeth in it, and, even more, in a positive, imaginative and constructive protest by individual citizens. The booklet is full of specific examples of the influence, the power for good, of what "one person can do by speaking up". It also stresses a constructive appeal as against a mere mad "tirade speech" or letter that "burns the recipient up" and fans the flames of hatred. Every writer should read this pamphlet. It is a good manual on public relations, and will help you to understand and handle your public better. Cost: 2¢ per copy, 50 for \$1.00. address: The Christophers, 18 East 48th St., NYC 17.

You help yourself when you stand fast for the best in American ideals, for the sanctity and responsibility of every individual.. Don't sell the free world short in word or deed!



## REWRITE

### BOOKS OF INTEREST TO WRITERS

**VILLAINS GALORE.** Mary Noel. The Macmillan Co. \$5.00. A serio-comic history of the Victorian story weekly. Not important, or particularly funny for writers. Rather sad.

**HATRED, RIDICULE OR CONTEMPT.** Joseph Dean. The Macmillan Co. \$3.75. A second look at a number of English libel cases (only one later than 1938!). Not important for writers.

**NEW SHORT NOVELS.** Ed. Mary Louise Aswell. A Ballantine Books Original. 35¢. Whether you like personally all of these four short novels or not, writers will welcome this recognition of an uncommercial medium & promising young writers. The editor tells the behind-the-scenes history of two of the stories.

**STANFORD SHORT STORIES.** 1954. Ed. by Wallace Stegner & Richard Scowcroft. Stanford University Press. \$3.50. Doubt the values—and Mr. Stegner seems to—of annually publishing the cream of a university writing workshop, it is probably good for these writers to get the benefit of the experience. And certainly other writers may benefit from examining these stories, as well as others.

**GOD AND MY COUNTRY.** Mackinlay Kantor. World Publishing Co. \$2.00. A short, nostalgic, & pleasantly sentimental novel, written for a special occasion. An anniversary of "Scouting" and the 40th anniversary of the scoutmaster whose story it is. Writers can learn from the skilled technique that occasionally wears thin.

**YOUR CHILD'S READING TODAY.** Josette Frank.. Doubleday & Co. \$3.95. A consultant for the Child Study Association has tried to get at the problems of necessary adjustment between books and children in a world "too full of things to do". This angle and the book lists for specific ages and groups and interests, are valuable aids to writers for children.

**THE JOURNEY.** Lillian Smith. World Publishing Co. \$3.50. This book is in a sense a picture of the journey that all of us take, to find meaning in our lives and writing; and reassurance for our faith that we are writing something worth reading a second time. It's the kind of book you want to linger over, & return to again and again. The boys who tell you how to read faster and more books by the minute, won't help you at all to absorb that deep feeling for self-understanding which it conveys. An unusual and exciting book.

**BOOKS AND PEOPLE.** Marion King. The Macmillan Co. \$5.00. Not a deep book, but thoroughly relaxing and enjoyable. It covers a period of 50 years of Mrs. King's stay as a librarian at the New York Society Library, now celebrating its 250th year of usefulness to authors and people. Her recollections, often brief, supply a fund of interesting and entertaining information. Just try to skim the 33-page index and you will see what I mean.

### GOOD BACKGROUND BOOKS TO READ

**A HISTORY OF THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY.** Clement Eaton. The Macmillan Co. \$5.50. A good one volume history of the background, rise & disintegration of the Confederacy as well as the economic and cultural life of the South under the impact of war.

**THE COUNTRY OF THE POINTED FURS.** Sarah Orne Jewett. Doubleday & Co. 85¢. It is good indeed to have this inexpensive (Anchor Books) edition of some of Miss Jewett's best known stories about Maine. The title piece, a superb long narrative, the lovely short story "A White Heron" and Willa Cather's preface, can all be treasured. But the rest are good also. Nostalgic pictures of the country and its people. And delightful writing.

**THE BOUNTY HUNTERS.** Elmore Leonard. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$2.00. A Western writer has a chance to move up to his first novel—and not a formula one either—in the combination of hard and paper back simultaneous publication. Suggests a new and better type of popular story-telling is rising in our midst.

**THE TALL MEN.** Clay Fisher. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$2.50. A more ambitious story by a more experienced novelist to depict the history & drama of the West as it "actually was". Do not let the opening sequence deter you.

**CLOWN.** By Emmett Kelly with F. Beverly Kelly. Prentice-Hall. \$3.95. The life story of the sad-faced clown, now featured in the big top circus. He plays it straight with heart-warming human interest and the candor of the country boy who likes his work. (Billy liked it, and at 8½ years found it not too difficult reading. Adult reading though.)

**HAIL COLUMBIA.** George Sundborg. The Macmillan Co. \$5.75. More properly this thick book might be called the biography of James O'Sullivan, the man who fought and died for that great new West of which this history of the Grand Coulee Dam is emblematic. Detailed and partisan in its politics, the author nevertheless records the realization of a modern miracle and a new philosophy of life, which American dreams, energy and enterprise made possible. Photographs would have helped.

**MANAGEMENT OF THE MIND.** Edward J. McGoldrick, Jr. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$3.00. The story of the McGoldrick Method, of Bridge House, and the NYC Bureau of Alcoholic Therapy, a unique means for rehabilitating addicts. It is applicable to other forms of neurotic compulsion. Hence a good book for writers not only to study self-help in personal disciplines, but for greater understanding of human psychology.

**NEW POEMS.** Ed. Rolfe Humphries. Ballantine Books. 35¢. It is encouraging to have such a representative anthology appear in the paper back field. Over 200 poems by more than 50 poets, big name and lesser known. (Note P. 7.)

## REWRITE

### AN EDITOR TRIES TO BE HELPFUL

A friend of ours recently asked a practical question of Evelyn Gordon, an editorial staff member of Methodist Youth Publications. For what reason was a certain story rejected? Miss Gordon very kindly replied. And it seems to me her answer contains several interesting reasons that writers may have overlooked. The writer who checked these reasons in his ms. before he sent it out would surely be that much ahead.

Here are the stimulating phrases in which Miss Gordon succinctly answered the author's question:

"...Much too long for the problem it presented...It was sprawling and therefore, it failed to reach any definite climax in emotion. The idea, I think, did not have enough dramatic implications for such a full dress presentation."

One of the commonest tendencies in young, inexperienced writers is to over-write. But there are many other ways in which a writer can achieve an automatic rejection by sending a potentially good ms. to the wrong market. It may be a juvenile, when it should be an adult. Or a Confession-type instead of a romantic story. Or it may hit the editor at the wrong time. There are other reasons but these are reasons an author can control, if he uses a little thought and study of a specific market before he sends a ms. out. And the more of these causes for refusal that he eliminates, the better chance he has for achieving an acceptance.

Miss Gordon suggests another common weakness that many writers fail to spot in mss. they send out. The absence of any specific, definite emotional climax. In other words, a story, article or poem fails to hit readers with one particular emotional punch. Editors I know have complained to me that their mailing rooms are all too frequently loaded with mss. that "just don't say anything." A story that may not be too well written, but which makes a strong, unified point, and so scores a powerful emotional impact on readers, will often earn for itself more attention from editors than the competently put-together ms. that just does not achieve any "definite climax in emotion".

Finally, there is the ms. that has a well considered "dramatic implication", but does not put it over effectively. There is a distinction between this defect and the previous one I have just discussed. There the impact was absent entirely; here it is buried beneath too many words. Or the punch is hidden away in the middle of a scene or a paragraph. In such a case the author needs better technical skill to bring it out into the open. That is what Miss Gordon means by her final sentence.

There is much to think about here.

### A PRICE CHANGE AND A GOOD IDEA

The price of the EDITORIAL DIRECTORY published by the Galub Publishing Co., 516 5th Ave., NYC 36, last year at \$27.00, has been reduced to \$12.95. This is in lieu of a new edition, which has been postponed till 1954. At that time the new edition will be made a wider and international one.

At first glance the price seems to be beyond reach of most writers, particularly the ones who need it most. However, it does offer an "editorial blueprint" for over 2,000 business, farm and consumer magazines. The exclusive editorial information includes an enormous amount of material valuable to the professional free lance writer. Such things as the individual magazine's news & feature deadlines for using the stuff it accepts; a full listing of editors and their individual departments; analysis of publicity & editorial material accepted; charge & payment policies for publicity, features and news, & mat-out-photo production requirements. Also a description of readership. It's the best, most practical thing of its kind I know of.

The 1955 edition will include Canada, Latin America, Europe and Asia. I hope that an increasing circulation will ultimately give it a price that more writers can afford. The research and high editorial standards, however, are necessarily expensive. Most market list books for writers just cannot, and do not compete on these levels.

### A VERY GOOD WRITERS' CLUB BULLETIN

The Long Beach Writers' Club, 3635 Caviota Ave., Long Beach 7, Cal., publishes an unusually attractive and efficient monthly bulletin. Starting with President Juanita Worsham's always interesting message, it offers news of Club events and contests; officers' names and addresses; ditto for new members; sales and acceptances; and an excellent report on markets. As we went to press, these market tips were being prepared by REWRITE's subscriber, Tarbelle Peters, and we hope the Club can persuade her to continue.

A number of the Club's members are either subscribers to REWRITE or are taking part in the poetry workshops. Mary A. Campbell, the Club's poetry director, seems to be conducting an especially active program. Her name is also to be found in a number of the better poetry magazines.

Beginning with May, the bulletin is being published on a subscription basis, at \$1.00 per year. It is well worth that, and should be a model for other clubs. I do not know if this bulletin, QUILL POINTS, is available to non-members, or whether the Club encourages interest and even membership from writers away from Long Beach. But I would certainly, if I were anywhere near there, make a point of contacting. For it is getting good things for writers done and displaying "hustle".

## REWRITE

### MARKETS HERE AND THERE

The Boston POST Short Story Contest, Harold A. Sandstrom, Boston 6, Mass. An important change has been made in the rules concerning this daily short short story award. One of the oldest fiction features, and for some years one of the few newspaper columns of its kind that has survived the high cost of paper, it was formerly open only to women writers. It is now open to men also.

Stories are limited to 500 words. These, quite naturally, are intended to be light & cheerful, to give morning readers a chuckle or a lift. Six stories a week are used. The pay is in the form of prizes: \$10, \$5, & \$2 (the editor selecting the two top stories & the four "also runs"). There is nothing limiting the contestants, but this is primarily a New England newspaper. Sase required if writers wish mss. returned. The winners are announced each week in the Sunday POST, and checks are mailed promptly the next day.

The POST has a number of other ways of awarding small sums to readers, and both the daily and Sunday POST offer examples of the pay filler, as well as opportunities for unpaid contributions. And the Sunday magazine although not now an open market, does buy an occasional feature article. A new publisher took over not long ago, and many changes are being made. Mostly for the better.

The Voice of St. Jude, Donald J. Thorman, 221 West Madison St., Chicago 6, Ill., has an attractive 4-page letter-rejection slip. It is a form, but conveys a personal touch. The inside pages list the general policy. It is a general Catholic family magazine which is published in the interest of the Claretian Missionary Fathers.

It uses 700-word fillers; articles, 1,800 words (2,600 top); a few short stories, and some verse. Reports usually in 3 weeks, pays 1¢ per word for prose. It welcomes writers with something to say, and this need not be specifically Catholic, if it does not "conflict with Catholic principles". Catholic subjects are, naturally, preferred. The back page is blank and I have seen evidence that the editor uses this to scribble a personal note on occasion.

Messenger of the Sacred Heart, 315 East Fordham Road, NYC 58, sent out an attractive circulation promotion piece that gave quite an illuminating insight into the contents. A number of articles, and also at least three stories, one of which was written by a non-Catholic writer.

The Christian Parent and My Chum, Christian Education Co., Box 31, Highland, Ill., use a terse, combination check-chart slip to reject mss. It allows the editor to state a number of reasons why he rejected, and from which magazine it comes. Also to sign a name. The one I saw was blue pencilled "Lyon". It shows that editors are trying to help.

### USE WISELY AND DON'T BE USED

This is a note for teachers of writing. A number of contests open only to writer-students in particular courses have cropped up recently. Most editors, I know, are honestly trying to dig up promising talent. Some publishers, however, lose no chance to promote their magazines and contests for writers in the professional field. I believe it is a wise teacher who appreciates that this kind of contest is apt to put a wrong emphasis on selling at the very time when a young or inexperienced writer might better concentrate on learning to think and write well.

This is something that writers could ponder, too. Most professions have schools for advanced study. But writing is one specialized profession where the line between the amateur and the professional is hazy. There is no arbitrary line of demarcation. Many a writer steps right into competition with experienced authors. Or starts in the experimental role of writing short fillers and by trial and error gradually becomes a professional without conscious knowledge that he's stepping over an imaginary line.

The important thing for teachers is not to allow themselves to be used at the expense of their students for promoting something. It is often a temptation to use a contest that costs the teacher nothing, as a "handle" to sell one's authority as a teacher. And for writers, particularly those who work alone, it is important to recognize that there is a time for learning and a time for trying out one's ability.

The ARCHER, Wilfred & Elinor Brown, Box 3857, Victory Center Sta., No. Hollywood, Cal., is raising its price to \$2 (4 issues) on Aug. 1. The two editors have also been elected to important posts in POETS OF THE PACIFIC. The ARCHER will 2 pages of poems by P. of P. members, who will receive \$5 per poem, and \$1, in "stencil-duplicated bulletins".

Barnard College has a new prize (the Elizabeth Janeway Prize — \$500) for its students.

### A COUPLE OF NEWS ITEMS

American Poetry League, Margie Boswell (who is membership chairman, and a member of WCS Family), 1516 West Terrell, Fort Worth 4, Texas, is accepting members by invitation prior to the June 30th deadline for Annual Poetry Contest and other events. Write Margie for details. We are donating two (2) awards (free subscriptions) for the Contest, which we have done for several years.

New York State Plays Project, Prof. A. M. Drummond, Goldwin Smith Hall 127, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., offers \$75, \$50, & \$25 for N.Y. State regional one-act plays of 15-30 minutes. Winning play will be produced at the State Fair. If published must remain royalty free 3 years. Closes: July 31.



## REWRITE

### YOU MUST LEARN TO DO IT YOURSELF FIRST

One of the commonest questions we're asked is: "Who is a good agent? I need one, and bad!" I am sure that we all need one, but a good question is: "Can we support one?" Let me start off by saying that Elva and I very gladly put writers in touch with agents when we believe it is a two-way proposition, and when we feel that there will be mutual satisfaction. But many writers aren't ready.

We are not agents ourselves and never pretend to be, although we do originate sales, a lot of them. We do this in two ways. (1) We tell writers what's wrong and what to do about it. The writer sends the ms. out to a market we often suggest, and it clicks. Often to an editor who has seen it before and rejected it, or has asked for changes. (2) We tell a writer: "You ought to do a feature or a story about —." (Our friend has talked about a subject or another friend interestingly and with authority.) This suggested assignment frequently gets picked up and is pushed to its logical conclusion—an acceptance. Incidentally, we never receive an agent's commission for such by-products and happy outcomes of our counsel. When a writer insists on sharing with us, we turn over our part of the "loot" to the WCS Scholarship Fund, which helps writers who cannot afford help.

I would certainly like to put all writers in contact with a good agent. Though we are painfully aware through our acquaintance and friendships with a number of professionals, that having an agent is not the ideal existence it is supposed to be. Most of the authors we know are periodically having "agent trouble". The ones who stay with one agent, over a long space of years, are few & looked upon by their friends as either lucky or miraculous, and possibly "queers".

In the case of many writers we have to beg off from giving names, simply because an agent, like an editor, won't be our friendly and welcoming business counsellor for writers if we send him too many unprofitable accounts. It is part of our stock-in-trade to weed out writers who (1) are not ready for, or (2) not profitable to an agent. Just the other day Elva had to explain to a poet who had a book of verse on his hands, that no agent would be interested in such a one-shot proposition. If there was fiction, or slick articles likely to be included in the deal, possibly. But poetry alone, definitely no.. And I had to tell a good friend of ours the large number of small sales he makes in the religious field, would not pay off either.

The late Jean Wilk, wife of Capt. Ahmed Abdullah, used to require that a writer sell, through his own efforts, at least \$1500 per year before she would take him on. Several other agents will gamble if a writer brings a single ms. capable of being sold for \$100 or more, and shows evidence of producing an

appreciable amount of copy regularly. Even the advertising agents charge their reading fees until you sell \$500 a year.

And what of these "agents" who advertise? We regretfully have been forced to adopt an arbitrary rule of thumb that we do not ever recommend any of them. No agent with a consistent record of selling regularly is likely to waste time coaching writers as "critic-agents" do. The successful agents invariably are acquainted with editorial personnel who, for a fee, will help to smooth out individual mss. susceptible of being sold. A writer generally promising, but not yet able to produce professional material, they recommend to some of the teachers of workshops and creative writing courses on the college or university level. Elva and I are naturally proud of the number of writers sent to us by agents and editors of important book publishers and magazines.

The amount of it is that the writer fools only himself, when he believes that an agent can lift him over the hump separating inexperienced writers from the regularly selling professional. Or that an agent can take off his shoulders the drudgery of digging out a new market for a ms. that doesn't sell to a variety of familiar ones. And he wastes his time and money travelling from one "critic-agent" to another.

I have told many writers that the difference between the rank beginner and the second rate professional or hack writer is the widest field a determined author must cross in his attack on the fortress of Success. It is a relatively easy one to surmount nevertheless. The competition is not strong and the withering machine gun of rejection, although heavy, is not dangerous. Much thinner is the distance between the second rater and the experienced, imaginative top-grade, really competent slick author. But here far more patience and persistence is required. A writer really must know his craft here, and also his way around. He must have real creative talent and back up his chips with the genuine know-how that only long experience, and cumulative practice in the arts of writing and selling give to man or woman determined to be a writer, or at the very least to earn a living by writing.

There are occasional flashes in the pan of course. But these never last very long. Not in the highly competitive field of high pay writing. It is not an accident that many of the big name authors have been selling over a period of ten, twenty or more years. They have learned to write. They have also studied the art of selling. And most of all, of working with editors. Oh, they may have the perennial agent too many lazy writers dream about. But he protects their rights, establishes contacts that the writer goes on to, and does by his own efforts alone, consolidate. He creates the product, shapes it according to the editor's needs & desires.